



Saskatchewan
Agriculture
and Food

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

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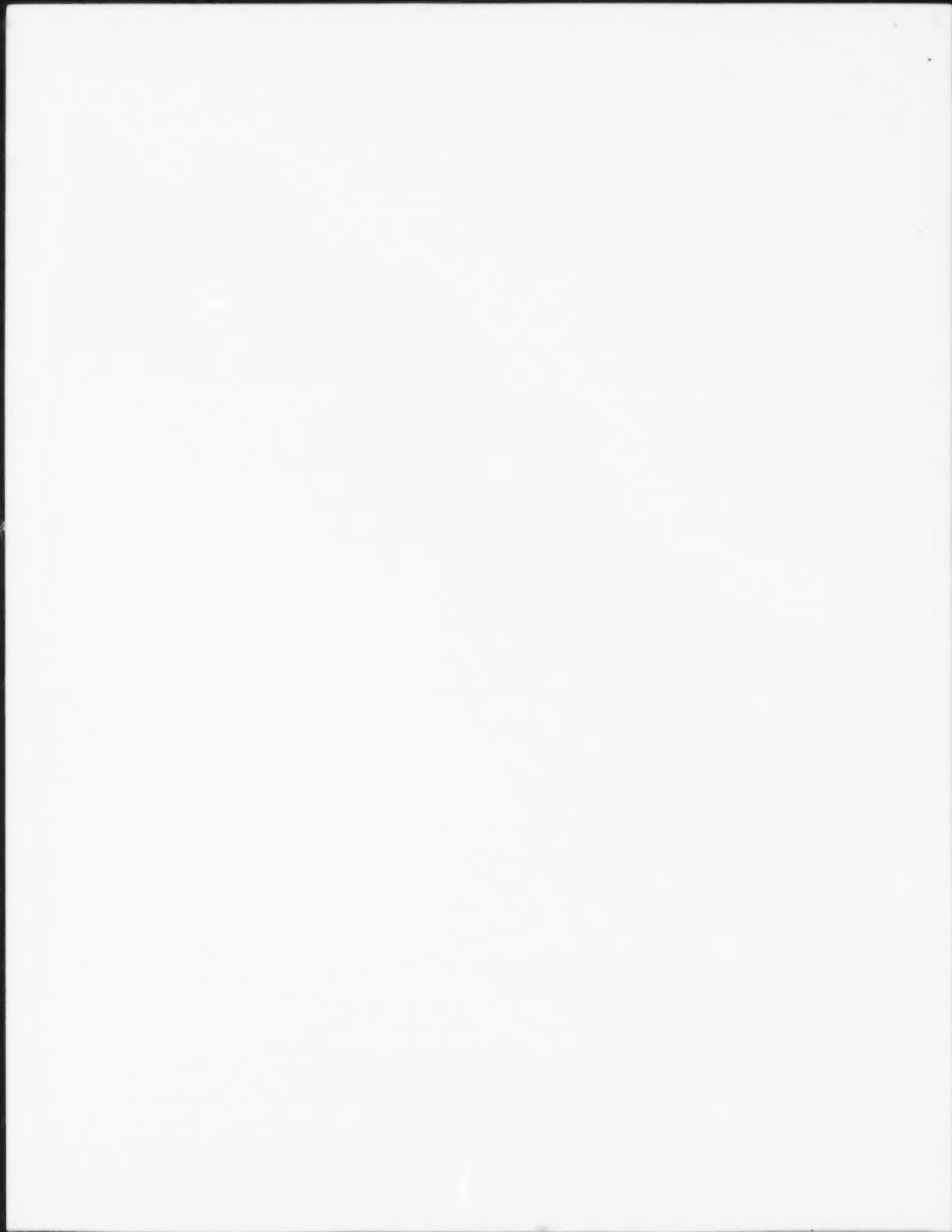
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Log Number: 06-41-186
Week of October 9, 2006

NEW BIOFUELS PROGRAM TO HELP FARMERS TAKE OWNERSHIP

Producer groups in Saskatchewan have the opportunity to diversify Saskatchewan's economy while contributing to Canada's supply of renewable fuel alternatives by applying for funding through the Biofuels Opportunities for Producers Initiative (BOPI).

BOPI will be administered in Saskatchewan by the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development (SCCD) Inc. Saskatchewan's share of the program will be \$591,180, of which a group can apply for as much as \$300,000 per project.

"The BOPI program will allow producers the opportunity to be closely involved in the production of biofuels, giving them more ownership of the process and increasing their share of the benefits from renewable fuels production beyond delivering feedstock," said SCCD Biofuels Advisory Group Chair Murray Purcell.

The Government of Canada is committed to requiring, nationally, an average of five per cent renewable fuel content in transport fuel by 2010. Environment Canada is leading the development of the overall strategy to implement the goal, with support from Natural Resources Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

AAFC wants to ensure that the five-per-cent target is implemented in ways that result in the greatest possible benefit to the agriculture sector, including significant ownership of biofuels production facilities by agricultural producers.

In order to provide as much benefit as possible, the objective of the initiative is to help agricultural producers in the development of sound, well-documented business plans for projects that have significant producer ownership (greater than one-third), as well as aiding to undertake feasibility or other studies to support the creation and expansion of the biofuel production capacity.

Application forms for the BOPI program are available through the SCCD website at www.sccd.sk.ca/bopi. The application deadline is Friday, October 13, 2006, with the SCCD Board of Directors to adjudicate project applications on November 22, 2006. Projects are not eligible if started before November 22, 2006.

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The Biofuels Advisory Group of SCCD will include the following members:

- Murray Purcell, Board of Directors, SCCD (Chair of Biofuels Advisory Group)
- Dr. Ashley O'Sullivan, Board of Directors, SCCD
- Dr. W.M. (Mike) Ingledew, Department of Applied Microbiology and Food Science, University of Saskatchewan
- Grant McVicar, Director of the Office of Energy Conservation, Saskatchewan Research Council
- Mark Stumborg, Section Head, Applied Science and Technology Transfer, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Judie Dyck, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association
- Dwayne Moore (Producer Representative), Rosetown

The BOPI program is administered under the existing terms and conditions of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) Program.

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NEW TEST CENTRE A BOOST FOR BIOFUELS INDUSTRY

A new test centre established by the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC) will benefit biofuel producers in the province and throughout North America.

The SRC's Biofuels Test Centre was officially opened on September 21. The Regina facility will provide the biofuel industry with more timely access to independent testing, a key component for producers who are required to meet international standards.

Biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel represent a huge opportunity in Saskatchewan, where feedstock, including grain and canola, is readily available. There are a growing number of biofuel producers in the province.

Weyburn and Lanigan are home to established ethanol facilities, and a new plant has just opened in Lloydminster. Milligan Biotech Inc. (MBTI), one of three commercial biodiesel producers in Canada, currently operates a plant in Foam Lake. Demand for biofuel is increasing in Europe and the United States. There are 50 biodiesel plants currently under construction in the U.S. alone.

These producers require testing of their product, so the potential demand for the lab's services will be North American-wide. The lab will use a special container that will make shipping biofuel samples from anywhere on the continent quick and simple.

Milligan Biotech Executive Manager Zenneth Faye says the test centre is a state-of-the-art facility. "Having SRC's Biofuels Test Centre located in the province will greatly improve turnaround times and our accessibility to their independent, third-party testing verification, which MBTI requires to meet customers' needs," said Faye.

The SRC lab is the newest biofuel test centre in North America, and builds on the SRC's 20-plus years of experience providing testing services for the petroleum industry.

The facility is a member of the Canadian Association of Environmental Analytical Laboratories, and is accredited by the Standards Council of Canada for specific tests registered with the council.

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FOOD LABEL SEMINAR A MUST FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Those little labels on food packages that tell you how many calories are in that chocolate bar or bag of peanuts may be tiny, but they hold a lot of important information.

As many food processors and manufacturers are aware, nutritional labelling is about to be mandatory in Canada for everyone from the smallest processor to the largest factory.

That's why the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc. is holding a Health Claims and Nutritional Labelling seminar in Saskatoon on October 17.

Shika Agbolor, Senior Food Scientist with the Market Development and Food Branch of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, says smaller food industry businesses may also be in the label game already if they supply large retail stores.

"The large retail deadline for these labels has already passed, so if you supply a large chain store, you have to be compliant already," she said.

What if you just sell your snacks at the local "Mom and Pop" operation? Mandatory nutrition labelling will come into effect in December 2007 for all food providers, but Agbolor says it will be much easier on your business to find out how to use those labels now.

"Some manufacturers may view this as just a technical responsibility, but it's important to remember that the manufacturer is responsible for the product," she said. "If the retailer receives a complaint or concern about the nutritional information not being correct, the manufacturer is liable."

The Food Centre seminar will deal with a number of topics about labelling that affect people and businesses across the food industry, including association members, academics, food researchers, retailers, manufacturers and even those who design the labels for products. Agbolor says the seminar has very wide appeal as a result.

"This seminar is also of interest to dietitians, nutritionists, health and food service workers – pretty much anyone who deals with the food supply chain," she noted.

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The basic how-to and technical information will be covered in detail for those who need to find out how to label their products. Seminar speaker Jyoti Sahasrabudhe formerly worked with Health Canada on reviewing the Canadian Nutrient Database (CND). The CND is the national system that records the nutritional values of all foods. Sahasrabudhe will explain how that database is used with chemical analysis of a food sample to determine the values we read on the label.

Other seminar speakers may help producers and manufacturers add value while they go through the labelling process. A University of Saskatchewan Food Science Specialist will explain how to properly have a sample of your product analyzed for labelling, and there will also be representatives on hand from federal and provincial programs to help producers determine if there is any industry assistance available to help companies make the label transition.

The Health Claims and Nutrition Labelling seminar runs October 17, 2006 at the Travelodge Hotel in Saskatoon. Pre-registration (prior to October 17) is \$106 per person (GST included) to attend, and on-site registration is \$130 per person. Interested parties can register by calling the Food Centre at (306) 933-7555, or e-mailing info@foodcentre.sk.ca.

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CN AND U OF S TEAM UP TO REDUCE AGRICULTURAL INJURIES

During the past 10 years, 1,200 adults and children have died in farm-related accidents in Canada, and almost 15,000 have suffered disabling injuries.

The Canadian National Railway Company, better known as CN, decided it wants to do something about these bleak statistics – and it is putting its money where its mouth is.

The corporation has announced a \$500,000 donation to the University of Saskatchewan to establish the Agricultural Injury Control Program (AICP). The program will be managed by the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture (CCHSA) on the university campus.

The objective of the AICP is to help reduce agricultural injuries and fatalities by bridging the gap between research and education. It will provide essential information to farm families and agricultural workers about air, food and water contamination, as well as adverse working conditions.

Dr. Jim Dosman, Program Leader and Director of the CCHSA, said, "Through this partnership with CN, we hope to see a 20-per-cent reduction in agriculture deaths in Saskatchewan and Canada over the next five years. I applaud CN for leading the way in this world-class Canadian-based health and safety initiative."

CN has been working with the University of Saskatchewan to promote health and safety in agriculture since the early 1990s, when it helped to establish the university's Centre for Agricultural Medicine, the forerunner of the CCHSA.

"CN has strong ties to the province of Saskatchewan and agricultural communities across Canada," said E. Hunter Harrison, CN's President and Chief Executive Officer. "We're happy to announce a significant donation to this farm safety partnership with the University of Saskatchewan."

CN has a wide-ranging rail safety program, and also supports several national and provincial community safety associations. The CCHSA's overall research and development program is supported by the University of Saskatchewan, the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Canada, the private sector and Saskatchewan rural municipalities.

(more)

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IMPROVING AG SALES SKILLS THE SUBJECT OF TRAINING SEMINAR

For the first time ever, the University of Saskatchewan Centre for Continuing and Distance Education (CCDE) is offering an intensive training seminar in sales skills specific to the agriculture industry.

The program, entitled "Skills for Sales Success for Agriculture Professionals," will be held October 24, 25, and 26 at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

According to Kari Nicolas, the Program Co-ordinator for Agriculture Programs at the CCDE, "Anyone with a sales component to their job [can benefit from the course]. It deals with core sales competencies that are applicable to almost any position that involves even partial responsibility for sales."

The Skills for Sales Success program will involve approximately 25 hours of classroom work over a three-day period. It is an intensive version of a 13-week program that has previously been offered by the centre.

"We designed the program to fit over a weekend because we've found that people simply can't afford to be away from their desks for more than a couple of days," said Nicolas.

The facilitator of the course is Fred Matiko, a Certified Sales Professional who has facilitated the longer version of the program for the department for nine years, and has taught an agricultural economics class offered at the university.

Nicolas said she also encourages agricultural producers to take the training course. "With diversification and the pursuit of new markets, producers are becoming their own sales people," she noted. "The skills being taught through the program are applicable to all aspects of business."

The course includes training in a number of important competencies, including consultative selling, relationship building, communications, strategic planning, time management and personal development.

The course curriculum has been approved by the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists as a professional development opportunity for agrologists and agricultural technologists. The registration fee is \$424, which includes all course materials, lunches and refreshments.

(more)

Since this is the first time the three-day version has been offered, Nicolas said she is anxious to see how participants evaluate the program. "We will be checking with them throughout the course to make sure that we are providing what is needed, and they will be asked to provide a written evaluation to help guide us in the future."

She suggested that the course may become an annual offering if the demand is present.

Information and registration forms for the Skills for Sales Success for Agriculture Professionals course are available online at www.extension.usask.ca/go/ag, or by calling (306) 966-5539.

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